

South Glamorgan Community Health Council

NHS Pharmacy Services in Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan

May 2022



Accessible formats

This report is also available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

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About the Community Health Councils (CHCs)

CHCs are the independent watchdog of the National Health Service (NHS) within Wales. CHCs encourage and support people to have a voice in the design and delivery of NHS services.

CHCs work with the NHS, inspection and regulatory bodies. CHCs provide an important link between those who plan and deliver NHS services, those who inspect and regulate it and those who use it.

CHCs hear from the public in many different ways. Before the coronavirus pandemic, CHCs regularly visited NHS services to hear from people while they were receiving care and treatment. CHCs also heard from people at local community events, and through community representatives and groups.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, CHCs have focused on engaging with people in different ways.

This includes surveys, apps, videoconferencing and social media to hear from people directly about their views and experiences of NHS services as well as through community groups.

There are 7 CHCs in Wales. Each one represents the “patient and public” voice in a different part of Wales.

Introduction & Background

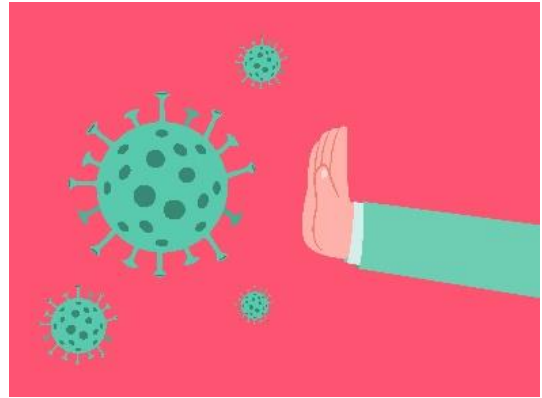
The South Glamorgan Community Health Council strives to hear from patients and the public across all demographics, communities, and groups within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

As well as requesting general feedback from the public on matters concerning their healthcare, the CHC also run specific, targeted campaigns for information and feedback from patients with specific health conditions or disabilities, or on specific services within the NHS, in order to ensure we hear from all groups of society in regards to their healthcare provision.

In this instance, the CHC wanted to hear directly from patients who had accessed any NHS Pharmacy service in Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan, about their experiences when doing so.



In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused unimaginable disruption to all aspects of everyday life, including access to, and provision of Healthcare services.



Government restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic, around social distancing, PPE and infection control, as well as increased workforce pressures caused by sickness and self-isolation requirements, resulted in a reduction in capacity across all NHS services.

NHS Pharmacies remained at the front line of the NHS during the pandemic; with Pharmacy premises remaining open to patients and the public, and staff continuing to meet the challenges of delivering NHS Pharmacy services in the settings of a global pandemic.

The CHC recognises the importance of gaining feedback from those who access NHS Pharmacy Services in Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan. In order to hear their experiences and measure their satisfaction with a view to making recommendations to the Cardiff & Vale



University Health Board on how to improve the experience from a patient point of view, if appropriate to do so.

The purpose of this report is to communicate the findings of the South Glamorgan CHC's 'Pharmacy Services in Cardiff & Vale' survey, along with the views of the public we have heard from.

The CHC would like to take this opportunity to thank the NHS and its staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, to continuing to support and care for patients and the public in our local area.



What we did

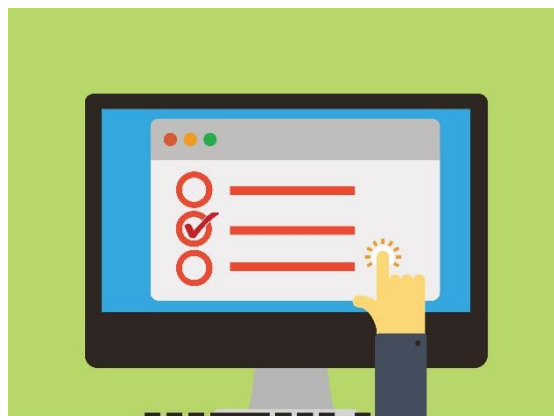


Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions, the South Glamorgan CHC has been unable to carry out physical scrutiny visits to NHS Services across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan as we would under normal circumstances.

As a result, we have been required to adapt the way we connect with patients and the public, in order to gather their views and experiences of accessing NHS Services.

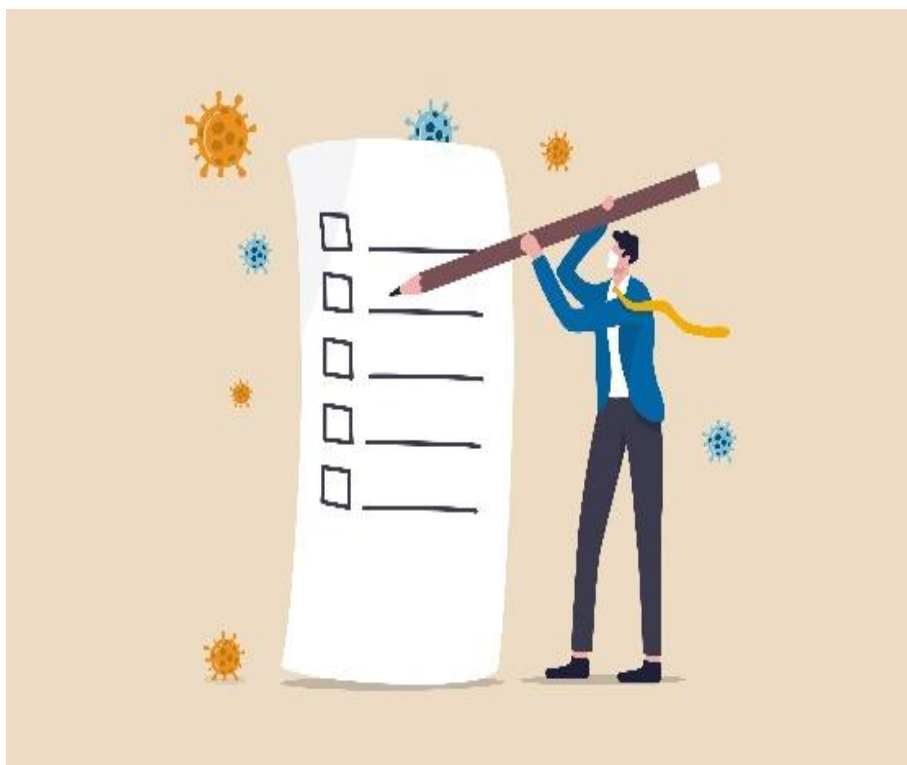
The CHC devised and published an online survey to gain feedback and insight from patients and the public on their experiences when accessing NHS Pharmacy services in Cardiff & the Vale of Glamorgan.

The survey was made available for patients to complete on our website, and publicised through our Facebook and Twitter social media channels. Details of the survey were also included within our regular stakeholder briefings.



The survey was available for completion in both English and Welsh from 12th January 2022 through to 6th April 2022, and asked questions around the following key areas:

- Accessing Pharmacy services
- Repeat prescriptions
- Patient satisfaction
- Covid-19 changes to service delivery
- Service improvement suggestions



Who we are hearing from

The CHC survey was open to patients who had any experience of accessing NHS Pharmacy Services in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

The CHC received a total of 318 completed online surveys, although not all respondents answered all questions.

318 (100%)
respondents
chose to complete
the English
language version
of our survey.

150 (47%)
respondents had
visited their
Pharmacy more
than 12 times in
the last 12
months.

286 (90%)
respondents have
a regular repeat
prescription.



What we heard

At a glance....

<p>22 (7%) respondents have purposely avoided visiting their Pharmacy during the pandemic as they were shielding</p>	<p>301 (96%) respondents have used their Pharmacy for prescription ordering & collection</p>	<p>22 (7%) respondents have purposely avoided visiting their Pharmacy during the pandemic due to 'social distancing'</p>
<p>19 (6%) respondents have visited their Pharmacy 1-3 times in the last 12 months.</p>	<p>40 (13%) respondents have accessed the '<i>Common Ailments Scheme</i>' at their Pharmacy</p>	<p>60 (19%) respondents have received their Flu vaccine at their Pharmacy.</p>
<p>116 (41%) respondents have not had a Medication Review in the last 12 months</p>	<p>112 (37%) respondents' confirmed their repeat prescription is ordered automatically for them.</p>	<p>143 (47%) respondents would prefer to order their repeat prescription online.</p>
<p>253 (76%) respondents were satisfied with the length of time they had to wait for their medication to be dispensed</p>	<p>128 (40.5%) respondents experienced problems when ordering or collecting their prescription</p>	<p>257 (84.5%) respondents experienced no difficulties in accessing Pharmacy services</p>

Accessing Pharmacy Services

Our survey asked respondents to provide information on how often they have visited their Pharmacy within the last 12 months.



19 (6%) respondents visited their Pharmacy between 1 and 3 times.

31 (10%) respondents visited their Pharmacy between 4 and 6 times.

38 (12%) respondents visited their Pharmacy between 7 and 9 times.

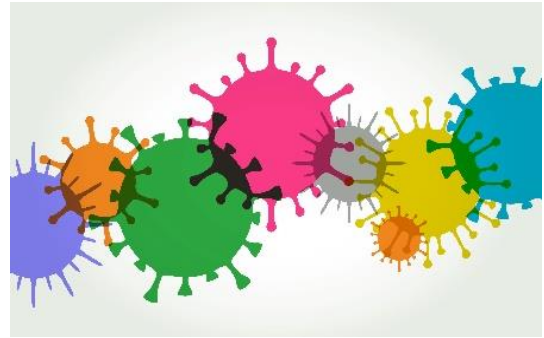
79 (25%) respondents visited their Pharmacy between 10 and 12 times.

150 (47%) respondents visited their Pharmacy more than 12 times.

● 1-3 times	19
● 4-6 times	31
● 7-9 times	38
● 10-12 times	79
● more than 12 times	150



The CHC was interested to learn about patients' behaviour in regards to accessing Pharmacy services during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and if the pandemic had caused a change to their usual behaviour.



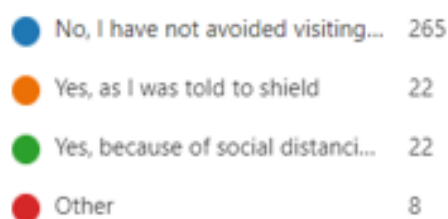
The CHC asked respondents whether they had purposely avoided visiting Pharmacy services during the pandemic, and if they had, what was their concern around this.

265 (83.5%) respondents stated that they had not avoided visiting Pharmacy services during the pandemic.

22 (7%) respondents confirmed they had avoided visiting Pharmacy services during the pandemic, as they were included within the population who had been advised to '*shield*' on health grounds.

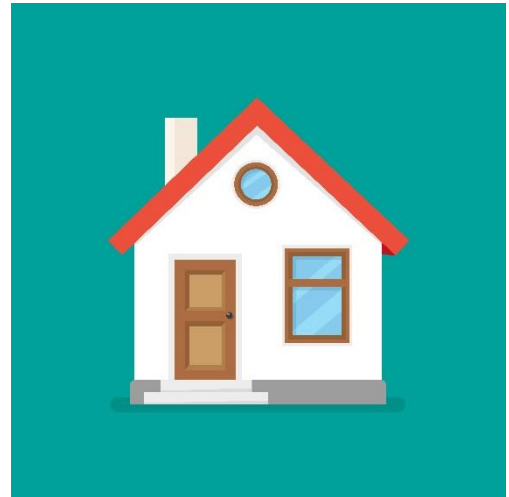
22 (7%) respondents confirmed they had avoided visiting Pharmacy services during the pandemic due to '*social distancing*'.

8 (2.5%) respondents answered '*other*' to this question.



We asked those eight respondents who answered '*other*' to provide further information on their response.

Among the responses received, two respondents confirmed that they were able to obtain the medication they required from their Pharmacy thanks to the home delivery service the Pharmacy provides, negating the requirement to attend the Pharmacy in person.



One respondent informed us that they only visited when necessary as the Pharmacy is '*always so busy*', whilst another confirmed that they have been avoiding Pharmacy services during the pandemic because of the '*queues*'.



One respondent informed us that they would have avoided visiting Pharmacy services if they had been able to, as they were part of the population advised to '*shield*' on health grounds.



'I would have if I had the chance because I should be shielding'

Another respondent gave their reason as the Pharmacy was '*unable to guarantee my prescription would be ready.*'

One respondent voiced their concerns in regards to the health of other Pharmacy service users.

'there are sick people attending the chemists!!'

We asked respondents to provide information on which specific services they have previously accessed at their Pharmacy. Respondents were encouraged to select all services accessed in this response, providing multiple responses per completed survey.

1 (>0.5%) respondent have accessed '*Smoking Cessation*' services.

8 (3%) respondents have accessed '*Emergency Contraception*' services.

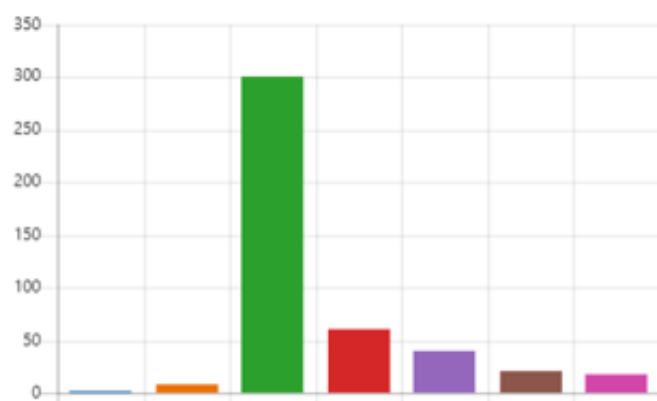
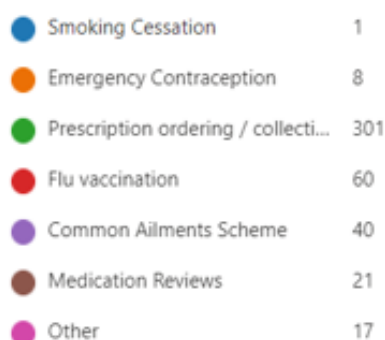
301 (96%) respondents have accessed prescription ordering and/or collection services.

60 (19%) respondents have accessed their Flu vaccination.

40 (13%) respondents have accessed the '*Common Ailments Scheme*'.

21 (7%) respondents have received a '*Medication Review*'.

17 (5%) respondents chose to respond '*other*' to this question.



The CHC asked those who chose to respond '*other*' to this question, to provide further information on this.

A number of respondents reported they had received their Covid-19 vaccination at their Pharmacy.



Others explained that they used their Pharmacy to purchase '*over-the-counter*' medicines, and to request advice from Pharmacy staff on a number of topics, including non-serious conditions such as mouth ulcers or small wounds, or advice on their medication.



One respondent informed us that they attend their Pharmacy for assistance when they are unable to access a GP.

'help when no Doctor is available'

A number of respondents reported visiting their Pharmacy to purchase other '*over-the-counter*' products, toiletries, shampoo and cosmetics.

The CHC questioned survey respondents, asking if they had experienced and difficulties in accessing Pharmacy Services.

267 (84.5%) respondents confirmed they had not experienced difficulties in accessing Pharmacy services.

49 (15.5%) respondents confirmed they had experienced difficulties in accessing Pharmacy Services.



For those who reported difficulties, the CHC gave them the opportunity to provide further explanation regarding their response.



We heard how some respondents were experiencing difficulties with accessing Pharmacy services due to their hours of business.

A number of respondents commented that their Pharmacy is closed on a Saturday or Sunday, or has shorter opening hours on the weekend.

A number of Pharmacies close their doors for an hour at lunchtime, working patients' explained how this makes it very difficult to collect medication or access services at times.

Patients also noted how opening hours could be changed at very short notice in response to backlogs of work or lack of staff, with these changes not being communicated to the patients who use the Pharmacy.

'Frustrating that they close for lunch.'

'Our local Pharmacy closes earlier on a Saturday and shut on a Sunday.'

'Shut at 1 till 2, Drs won't give out prescriptions before 9.30 or 2-3. It adds another 2 days wait if you put your prescription in via Pharmacy.'

'Isn't open on weekends so has been difficult to get from work in evenings to get medication at times.'

'During the pandemic the Pharmacy would be closed at random times. If the pharmacist is on lunch medication cannot be dispensed. Very frustrating. Telephone constantly engaged.'

'Changing opening times without warning, no information made public to make you aware of this. Long queues. Lack of staff management, they would all go looking for something.'

'Closed to catch up as short staffed.'

'Pharmacy closed for 3 days due to staff illness when my prescription was there!'

'Pharmacy closed during normal hours.'

'On weekends when unable to drive local closes at 12.30.'

'Pharmacy not open in the weekend or after 6pm. Difficult to access when working.'

Other difficulties noted by respondents within the survey referenced how busy the Pharmacy is when they attend. Patients confirmed there were always queues, at all times of the day.

'Always queuing outside the door, no matter what time of day you visit.'

'Always a long queue. No fun waiting out in the cold and rain.'

'Our Pharmacy seems to have got really busy recently as customers have left the 2 other pharmacies in the area. Their service has really gone downhill recently!'

'always busy so cut opening hours'

'Always very busy especially since shorter opening times'

Many patients noted frustrations that they are either unable to contact their Pharmacy via the telephone, or must call up to 42 times before they are able to connect to the Pharmacy and speak to someone.



'They don't answer the phone and the queue is always over an hour'

'before I realised I could order online I did it via the phone and one time it took me 42 calls to get through'

'Seemingly impossible to get hold of by telephone but understandable given how busy they have been.'

'Never answer phone as busy. Always long waits'

'Not answering the phone to ask can I pick up'

Patients noted how they felt that Pharmacies services were under increased pressure due to lack of staff, with a few respondents unfortunately describing staff members as *'rude', 'unprofessional', 'unhelpful and inexperienced'*.

'Unhelpful and inexperienced staff'

' [Pharmacy in] St Mellons often not open as they didn't have a pharmacist'

'Our Pharmacy had less staff during Covid restrictions so everything took longer and they absolutely never answered the phone so the only way to communicate with them was to go in.'



'Rude, disorganised, unprofessional'

'The Pharmacy unavailable on phone and always short staffed.'

'Always busy and not enough staff to cater for patients.'

'Lack of staff employed.'

It was disappointing to hear from one respondent who reported struggling to organise a delivery whilst *'shielding'* as they didn't feel Pharmacy staff believed they were not being truthful in regards to their *'shielding'* status.

'When shielding I struggled to get a delivery. I was judged by my age (I was 35 at the time) and Pharmacy staff didn't believe that I was shielding.'



A number of respondents took the opportunity at this time to provide feedback on difficulties they had experienced in regards to prescription services.



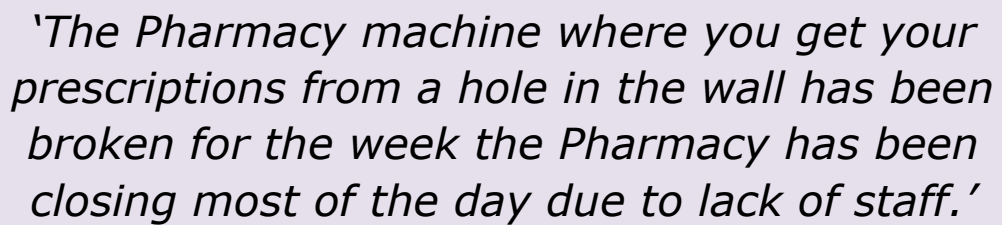
Long waits for medication requests to be processed for collection, and for medication to be dispensed, lack of stock and broken automatic dispensing machines were all reported.

[Please note we have removed names of organisations from the text]

'[Pharmacy in] Cowbridge is an abomination. Last time I went there I waited over an hour for my prescription and had been told it would only be 15 minutes. I know of many others who have experienced this too.'

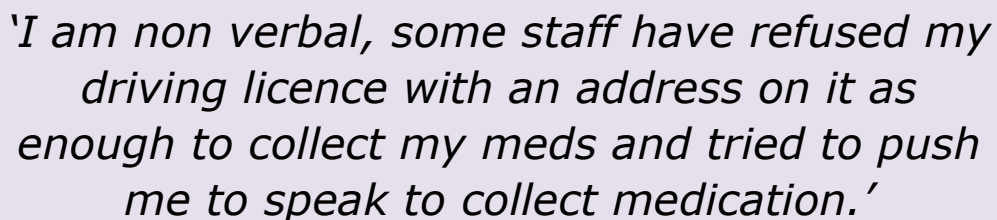
*'time it takes to get your medication
..... some times 5 days.'*

'There have been times when for 'one off' prescriptions, no Pharmacy in the area has stock of the medicine required.'



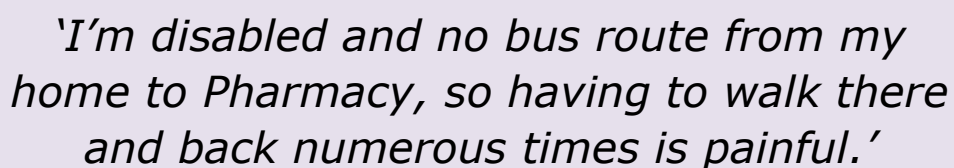
'The Pharmacy machine where you get your prescriptions from a hole in the wall has been broken for the week the Pharmacy has been closing most of the day due to lack of staff.'

With another respondent noting difficulties encountered with Pharmacy staff whilst collecting medication, due to being non-verbal.

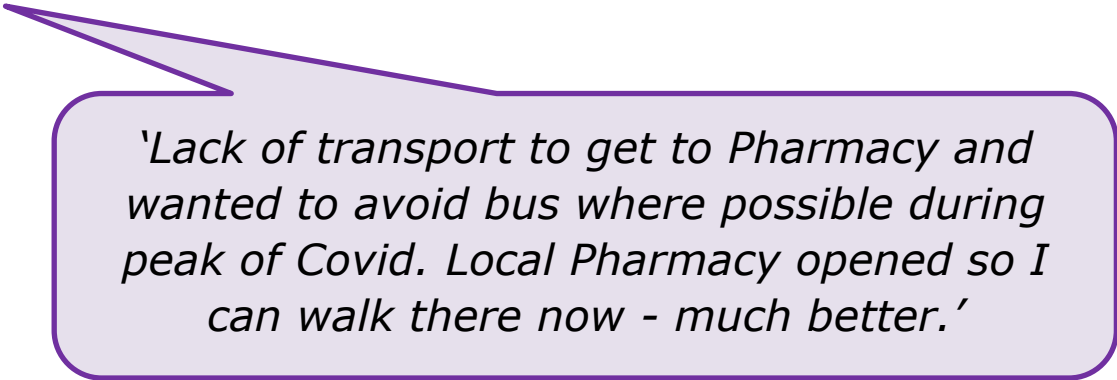


'I am non verbal, some staff have refused my driving licence with an address on it as enough to collect my meds and tried to push me to speak to collect medication.'

A further difficulty noted by a number of respondents was a lack of transport, both public and private, affecting patients' ability to access Pharmacy Services.



'I'm disabled and no bus route from my home to Pharmacy, so having to walk there and back numerous times is painful.'



'Lack of transport to get to Pharmacy and wanted to avoid bus where possible during peak of Covid. Local Pharmacy opened so I can walk there now - much better.'

One respondent noted difficulties in regards to the 'Common Ailments Scheme' and the advice that they received under this scheme.

'Twice tried Pharmacy common ailment scheme - twice got wrong advice/medication - one with consequences I still suffer from today (18 months later).'

One respondent noted difficulties with confidentiality due to a lack of consultation facilities.

'Also lack of private consultation facilities'



Repeat Prescriptions

In response to the challenges faced by Pharmacy services during the Pandemic, a number of Pharmacies increased the required notice period for the ordering and processing of prescriptions from 48 hours, to up to 7 days.

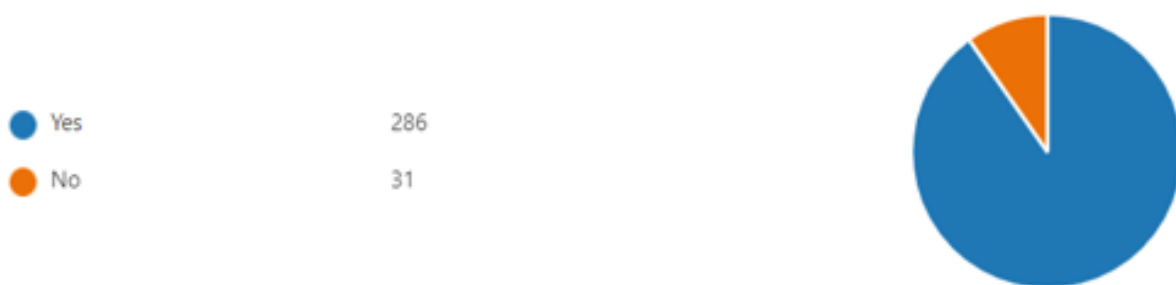


The CHC wanted to gain feedback from patients in regards to the process for requesting and collecting repeat prescriptions, and any issues they may have experienced.

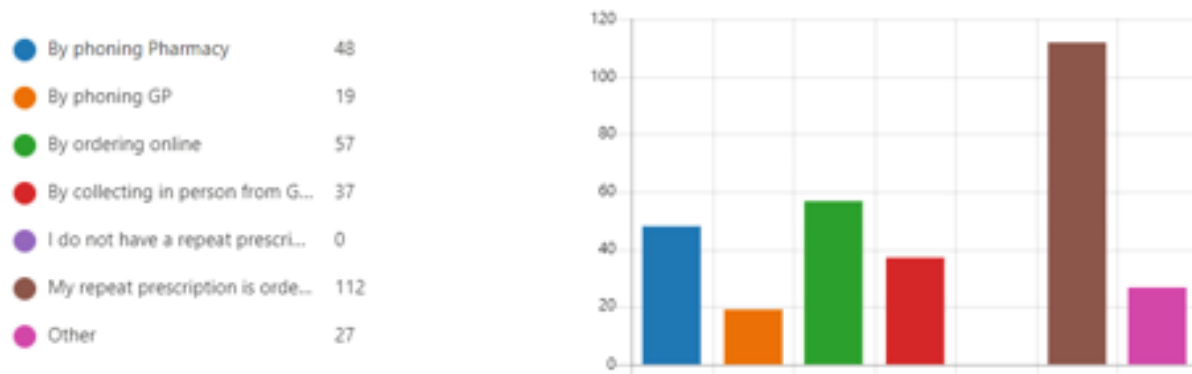
We asked respondents to confirm whether they had a regular, repeat prescription.

286 (90%) respondents confirmed they did have a regular repeat prescription.

31 (10%) respondents confirmed they did not have a regular repeat prescription.



The CHC also asked respondents to provide information as to how they currently order their repeat prescription.



48 (16%) respondents order their repeat prescription by phoning the Pharmacy.

19 (6%) respondents order their repeat prescriptions by phoning the GP.

57 (19%) respondents order their repeat prescription online.

37 (12%) respondents collect their repeat prescription from the GP in person, to take to the Pharmacy.

0 respondents replied that they do not have a repeat prescription.

112 (37%) respondents confirmed that their repeat prescription is ordered automatically for them.

27 (9%) respondents answered 'other'





Additional methods of ordering were noted by the respondents who answered 'other' to this question.

Respondents informed us that they can order their repeat prescription '*by post and SAE*', '*by emailing GP*' and by '*Drop note in box. Used to be able to do online but can't which is a pity.*'

The CHC then asked respondents, what would be their preferred way to order a repeat prescription.

64 (21%) respondents would prefer to phone the Pharmacy to order their repeat prescription.

18 (6%) respondents would prefer to phone the GP to order their repeat prescription.

143 (47%) respondents would prefer to order their repeat prescription by ordering online.

26 (9%) respondents would prefer to collect their repeat prescription from the GP, to take to the Pharmacy.

51 (17%) respondents answered 'other' to this question.

● By phoning Pharmacy	64
● By phoning GP	18
● By ordering online	143
● By collecting in person from G...	26
● Other	51





Of the 51 respondents who answered '*other*', **22** (43%) respondents would prefer to have their prescription ordered '*automatically*'.

1 respondent would prefer to order their prescription via post.

13 (25%) respondents chose not to provide any additional information on how they would prefer to order their repeat prescription.

The CHC enquired as to whether survey respondents had experienced any problems when ordering or collecting their prescription.

128 (40.5%) respondents confirmed they had experienced difficulties when ordering or collecting their prescription.

188 (59.5%) respondents informed us they had not experienced any difficulties when ordering or collecting their prescription.



The CHC then asked respondents to provide additional information on any difficulties they had experienced.

Many respondents noted the following issues;

- around stock levels of medication,
- issues in communication between GP and Pharmacy which then results in the patients being required to rectify issues themselves by going back and fore between the GP and Pharmacy.
- Respondents listed missing or incorrect items, missing prescriptions and delays in processing caused by the issuing GP practice.
- Other received medication they did not want or require.
- Inefficiency causing long waits, and long queues were also listed, as well as,
- a lack of communication from Pharmacy to patients around unavailable items or when their prescription is ready for collection.
- inability to obtain their prescription due to a 'Medication Review' being required.

'[Pharmacy] is constantly out of stock of prescriptions. Systems are always 'down' when I arrive. They can never find my prescription although I have been on repeat there for 2 years. Minimum wait time is 20 mins for a prescription they tell me is ready for pick up. Not ideal when in pain or discomfort to stand and wait 20-40 mins for 2 boxes tablets. Improvement needed'

'prescriptions going missing from one pharmacist, so we changed to another one'

'When items had been changed on the repeat prescription. The Pharmacy would say they have not got the new item on the repeat and to speak to GP, which was next door. This would mean queuing up outside GPs and it was always the GPs error, not the Pharmacy. Then going back to Pharmacy and queuing to put prescription in and then waiting outside again until it had been made up'

'The [Pharmacy] is unable to diary your medication order so you need to call a week prior to collecting. The repeat we have includes insulin and 7 days is a long time to wait for order. Sometimes they haven't got your medication in stock, the insulin we have can be hard to locate so I have had to ring around to source. The whole process is very stressful. We used to use repeat service at Lloyds but were let down so now deal direct with GP.'

'Missing items when collecting even though they've been ordered, numerous times wrong medication given, once given anti-psychotic medication instead of rls medication, numerous times medicine not in stock and have to make numerous visits to get full prescription. Telephone calls not returned by Pharmacy staff.'

'[Surgery] have recently changed their process without telling their patients, so you have to inform them that the Pharmacy that you have been going to for 10 years is your preferred Pharmacy or they won't send your repeat to them even when the Pharmacy orders it for you..... I'm guessing this is a power crazy admin process at the surgery as a couple of my neighbours have had the same issue with this surgery. The Pharmacy have been as helpful as they can be.'

'Pharmacy closest to our surgery is incredibly inefficient. Long queues, and often there are problems with the repeat prescriptions I pick up. Usually I hear at least two other people in the queue having same problems. I have now chosen to pick up prescriptions and take elsewhere. As I have had to make so much effort to go back and forth between GP and Pharmacy to sort out problems, I will order and pick up from the GP. The Pharmacy cannot be relied upon to have the medication available and are adamant it isn't their fault. Even the surgery staff seem exasperated.'

'Getting ileostomy supplies is problematic almost every time. Either the supplier blames the GP or visa versa. Generally it takes 20+ phone calls to sort it with GP surgery. Also Loperamide with Codeine on the same prescription. Due to high output ileostomy, I need both, arguing for them means delays, frustration and wasted time.'

'My repeat prescription has been completely messed for 3 months up by a medication change and I've just had another. Doctors blames chemist and chemist blames Doctors.'

'There were at least three occasions in the last 12 months when I didn't get all or the right medication'

'If I don't need certain items I always inform them but often get them anyway so I now have a lot of medication I don't need..'

'I have had a repeat prescription for a number of years but for the last 9 months or so I had continuous problems, chemist not submitting requests or I have to get people to check medication is there as they haven't contacted me which they always did'

'Never ready on time and zero communication when things are out of stock'

'They have often had a longer turn around than a week and I am on weekly or sometimes 3 day prescriptions due to risk.'

'When enquiring with Pharmacy about my prescription, I was told they did not have it. I phoned my surgery and was told it was collected by the Pharmacy driver, but the Pharmacy insisted they had not had it, on another occasion I ordered my prescription on the 12th January but was not informed to collect until 24th January.'

'Always have a problem with my Mums' prescription. Either wrong meds on there or not enough so have to have another delivery or collection.... Can't see how Pharmacy can't have the right meds when ordered 10-14 days before.'

'Prescription lost between surgery and Pharmacy. Pharmacy forgetting to send monthly request to GP. Pharmacy not informing me of missing items so I run out of medication. Incorrect items dispensed to me. Monthly request not processed because I also requested a one off prescription.'

'Missing items or forgotten to provide. Saying prescription will be ready on a certain day and not pick up before. Then when you collect it has been available for days.'

'The Pharmacy is invariably choked with work - I have nothing but praise for the hardworking staff who are cheerful and professional at all times BUT more often than not, the scrips have not been dispensed and either a wait or repeat visit is usually required.'

'I used to collect my repeat prescription from [Pharmacy], Grangetown, but about 6 months they continuously lost my prescription, didn't meet promised times, not ready when needed and this means that I had to stop of my essential medication that keeps my disease under control. Thus I decided to change Pharmacy and now I go to [Pharmacy in], Cardiff Bay. Excellent service, I don't have to worry about anything, they always have my medication on time and I get a SMS to let me know it's ready.'

'Massive queues at Pharmacy..'

'90% of the time of collecting my prescription there is always something missing'

'Each time I needed to refill my prescription it was a nightmare and something always went wrong. I had some better success at a local, non-chain Pharmacy, but still struggles. Dosages were wrong a few times. Refills were not ready when said they would be. Once when I went to pick it up, they said they were out of the medication I was prescribed. It had been put in 4 days before, I don't know why they waited until I went to pick it up to say they were out. They didn't offer any assistance and I basically went on a wild chase to other Pharmacies to find it, later finding out there was a problem with the supplier and everyone was out. I then had to ask my GP to find an alternative which they did, but I went two days without. I felt they should not have put a new mum with high blood pressure and a brand new baby (along with so many others who had trouble) through so much and because they were short staffed and super busy because of Covid restrictions they were not able to adequately do their job.'



Our survey then asked respondents how satisfied they were with the length of time they had to wait for their medication to be dispensed, when collecting their prescription.



Very satisfied	176
Fairly satisfied	59
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	24
Fairly dissatisfied	31
Very dissatisfied	20



Despite comments provided earlier regarding long waits for medication to be dispensed, 259 (84%) respondents reported no dissatisfaction with the length of time they had to wait.

176 (57%) respondents were very satisfied.

59 (19%) respondents were fairly satisfied.

24 (8%) respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

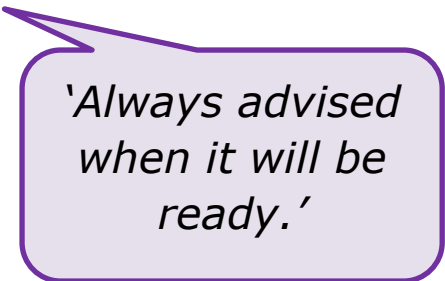
31 (10%) respondents were fairly dissatisfied.

20 (6%) respondents were very dissatisfied.

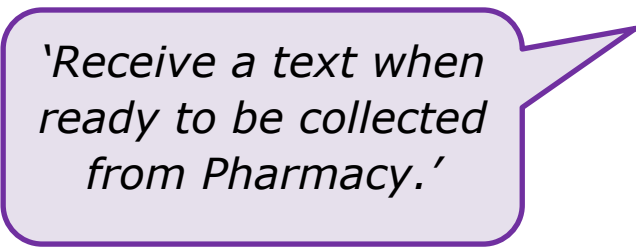
When asked to provide further information behind the reasons for their answer, those who responded positively gave a number of explanations.

Good communication was noted by a number of respondents, whilst others explained their medication was dispensed very quickly and was already ready when needed. Lack of queues in the Pharmacy were praised by some and Staff were also commended, being described as *'friendly and helpful'*, *'knowledgeable'* and *'organised'*.

Others explained that they made use of an automatic dispensing machine which is available 24 hours per day.



'Always advised when it will be ready.'



'Receive a text when ready to be collected from Pharmacy.'

'Pharmacy contact me to tell me meds are ready for collection.'

'Always ready for collection.'

'Local Pharmacy so no queues.'

'Script is always ready. Never have to wait too long. Staff are amazing.'

'Pharmacists in Penarth are always very efficient and helpful.'

'I collect from the automatic dispenser outside the Pharmacy so it's very convenient as can access 24 hours a day.'

'The staff at Pharmacy in Llantwit Major go above and beyond to help and ensure your experience runs smoothly.'

'staff are welcoming knowledgeable and helpful.'

'Excellent service a 5 minutes walk from home in Pentyrch. Good advice for minor ailments and prompt efficient service when Pharmacy collects Doctors prescription / makes up prescription. So efficient, 5 mins to collect".'

'Repeat always in and available'

Respondents who stated they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with the length of time they had to wait for their medication to be dispensed, noted inconsistent levels of service as a reason for their response. Others noted occasional issues regarding medication being available, or changing staff levels, whilst others reported their Pharmacy as being busy and the requirement to wait outside due to Covid-19 restrictions.

'On the odd occasion not all the medication was available and hence further visits required'

'It's very hit and miss dependent upon staff levels and if pharmacist is in consulting room.'

'Sometimes its straight away, other times they cant find it, then have to check the system, then find out they don't have such and such in full stock (besides the fact its ordered every 2 months), or then they wait till someone else has been served and another assistant will find it in two seconds.....Oh lordy, it can be a lottery. other times you can go there and stand there like a lame duck and I'm sure I'm invisible'

'Very busy and distancing measures in operation. Can't take my dog. Hate standing outside in cold/wet/windy weather. Better when I can arrange delivery which is not always easy to plan ahead.'

'Depending on the time of day, there can be quite a pick up delay.'

For those who reported dissatisfaction with the length of time they had to wait for their medication to be dispensed, they also provided further explanation for their response.

Many respondents were unhappy with the length of time they had to wait, with wait times of over an hour being

reported. Others noted the opening hours of their Pharmacy causing issues for them when trying to collect medication.

Stock issues were again reported with multiple visits to Pharmacy being required by patients and disappointingly, staff attitude was again noted as poor by some respondents.

'I'm often amazed at how long it takes to get a tube/bottle off the shelf. A lot of general chit chat going on about lunch. Am thinking of going to a different Pharmacy not the one attached to the surgery as they also often don't have the medication prescribed and requires return trips.'

'Rude staff and its never ready.'

'Wait times are horrendous even when no one else is queueing'

'Have waited over an hour. Occasionally outside in the pouring rain.'

As my Pharmacist is closed on a Saturday it can take up to five days to pick up medication'

'It's never ready. Only when I go to collect do they pull the script out to be filled I then have to wait up to 30mins or come back later in the day which is annoying especially when working and family commitments etc. i don't have time for the Pharmacy to do that and I can't understand why they run it this way.'



Medication Reviews

For those patients who receive a repeat prescription on a regular basis, an annual Medication Review is carried out by a suitably qualified health professional.

The purpose of a Medication Review is to discuss the patients' medication, and to check that patients' are prescribed the most appropriate medicines at an appropriate dosage.

Under normal circumstances, following receipt of 12 monthly prescriptions, a patient is required to undergo a Medication Review before a GP will issue a further repeat prescription. The CHC is aware that this

requirement has been relaxed whilst the NHS was tackling the Covid-19 Pandemic, and was interested to obtain data on the situation.

We asked respondents who regularly receive a repeat prescription, whether they had received a Medication Review within the last 12 months.



170 (59%) respondents confirmed they had received a Medication Review within the last 12 months.

116 (41%) respondents confirmed they had not received a Medication Review within the last 12 months.

When asked to provide more information, **23** (19%) of those who had confirmed they had received a Medication Review, and provided additional information, went on to explain that these had been carried out by their GP.

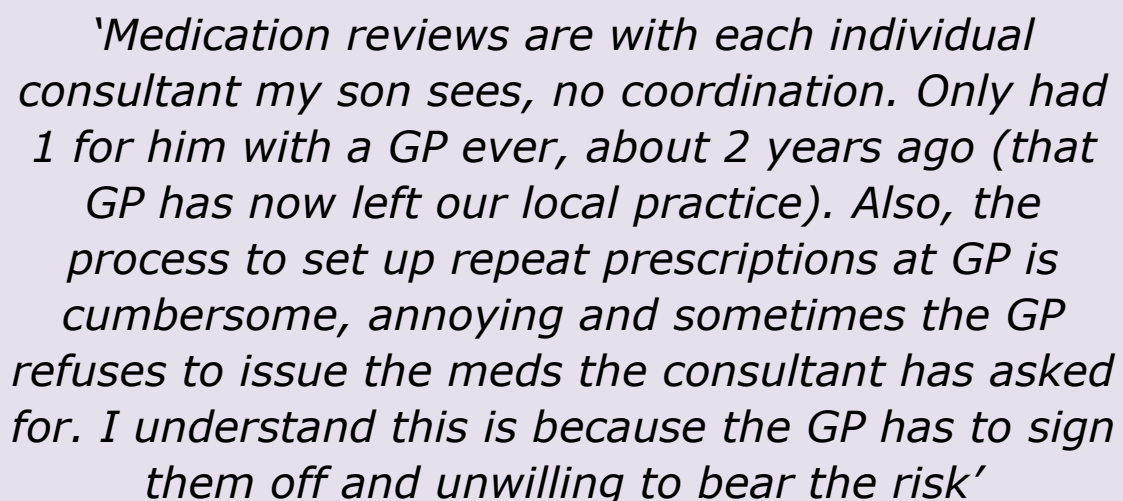
5 (4%) respondents were reviewed by a Consultant.

5 (4%) respondents were reviewed by a Nurse.

1 respondent informed the CHC they were reviewed by Dermatology.

Respondents also confirmed that these reviews had been carried out in a variety of ways, using the telephone, via email or by using e-consult.

Some did raise concerns as they didn't feel they had received a 'proper review' over the telephone. Whilst one respondent noted issues with co-ordination around multiple reviews.



'Medication reviews are with each individual consultant my son sees, no coordination. Only had 1 for him with a GP ever, about 2 years ago (that GP has now left our local practice). Also, the process to set up repeat prescriptions at GP is cumbersome, annoying and sometimes the GP refuses to issue the meds the consultant has asked for. I understand this is because the GP has to sign them off and unwilling to bear the risk'

Respondents who informed us that they had not received a Medication Review within the last 12 months, went on to provide further information.

Some explained how they were unable to book an appointment with their GP to undergo a review, whilst others reported Covid-19 as being the reason they had not received a review. Other respondents were unable

to attend Medication Reviews they had booked due to becoming unwell with Covid-19 or the requirement to self-isolate.

It was of concern to note that some respondents informed us they had not received a Medication Review for 3 years, whilst others stated they have not been offered a Medication Review at all.

'Even if I needed a review it was virtually impossible to get appointment with a doctor. Not only that there would be no continuity of seeing the same physician'

'Had one 3 years ago in Boots'

'Want one but COVID still an issue'

'GP busy with more important issues'

'The GP is impossible to contact and make no pro-active contact with me, it is shocking how little I treat they have in their patients, but my local Pharmacy is lovely'

'I've never been asked by my surgery or Pharmacy to consult about my current medications.'

'Diabetes regularly reviewed. Other medication not reviewed.'

'It's never been offered. Would want a review done by my GP.'

Pharmacy Consultations

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the NHS introduced telephone and video consultations for some services. The purpose of this was to reduce footfall across various NHS premises, in an attempt to protect staff and patients.



The CHC questioned respondents whether they have been offered telephone or video consultation by their Pharmacy.

● Yes - telephone consultation	17
● Yes - video consultation	0
● Yes - both	1
● No	293



17 (5%) respondents have been offered a telephone consultation.

0 respondents have been offered a video consultation.

1 (>0.5%) respondents have been offered both a telephone consultation and a video consultation

283 (94%) respondents have not been offered a telephone consultation or a video consultation by their Pharmacy.

We then asked patients to rate their experience with regards to both telephone and video consultations.



9 (50%) respondents rated their experience as Excellent.

5 (27.5%) respondents rated their experience as very good.

3 (17%) respondents rated their experience as good.

1 (5.5%) respondents rated their experience as poor.

0 respondents rated their experience as very poor.

The respondent who reported a negative experience had received a telephone consultation and went on to explain further:-

'All the Pharmacist asks is if you have any concerns about the medication you are taking. Are there any problems'

Respondents reporting a positive experience went on to explain that they received very good advice. Staff received high praise for their attitude and professionalism, and were described as being *'supportive'*.



'The village Pharmacist is knowledgeable and aware of my ailments. I trust him'

'Very knowledgeable and helpful advice'

'Pharmacy give time and understanding as to me needs'

'Professional and polite. Happy to explain anything unclear'.

'Rang to discuss a problem arranged appointment & sorted - better than GP.'

The CHC then asked respondents how they would feel about the use of telephone or video consultations in the future.

● I would be happy to use it	140
● I would prefer to be seen face...	105
● Not sure	65



140 (45%) respondents confirmed they would be happy to use telephone or video consultations in the future.

105 (34%) respondents confirmed they would prefer to be seen face to face.

65 (21%) respondents confirmed they were not sure how they feel about the use of telephone and video appointments in the future.

The CHC also asked survey respondents if there are any changes to the way Pharmacy services have been delivered during the Covid-19 pandemic, that they would like to see remain after the Covid-19 pandemic.



Over 50% of the responses provided at this time, stated that there are no changes that have been introduced to service delivery as a result of Covid-19, that respondents want to see remain.

Patients reported wishing to see everything to revert to how it was prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

'No, I can't wait for things to return to normal and don't want to see Covid used as an excuse for diminished services in the future. Whilst people have been accommodating and have accepted the challenges of the last two years, I don't believe it can continue indefinitely.'

There were a number of changes however that were noted by other as changes that they would like to see remain after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Delivery of medication was noted by a number of patients as being very convenient. Whilst a small number commented that they would like to see social

distancing and the requirement to wear a face mask remain following the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Text messages sent to patients regarding collection of their medication was a welcome change patients wish to see remain, along with the use of the automatic prescription machines that have been introduced in a number of Pharmacies.



Online services such as GP appointments and prescription ordering was noted by some, whilst e-consult was praised by others.

Telephone consultations were comended in certain circumstances, and patients believe they should continue to be used more than they were before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Service Improvement Suggestions

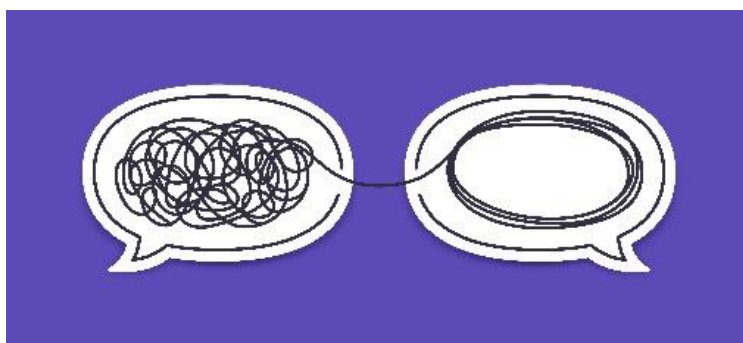
The CHC always likes to ask survey respondents whether they have any suggestions they would like to make on how their experience could be improved.



In this case, we asked respondents if there was anything they thought would make their experience of accessing Pharmacy Services better.

Respondents provided the following suggestions for improving their experiences:-

- Improve communication between GP and Pharmacy.
- Improve communication between Pharmacy and Patients, specifically regarding the progress of prescription requests and Medication Review requirements.
- Employ more staff to increase Pharmacy capacity.
- Open on weekends.
- More privacy when discussing confidential issues.
- Provide delivery service.
- Less waiting around, especially outside, when collecting medication.
- Separate queues for those who wish to collect prescriptions, and for those who wish to purchase toiletries or over-the-counter medications.



Learning from what we heard

In recent years, Pharmacies have become more than just somewhere you can collect your prescription or buy over-the counter remedies. Increasing numbers of Pharmacies now offer additional services such as the Common Ailments Scheme or Smoking Cessation Services, and patients have told us how they value the knowledge and advice provided by their local Pharmacy staff.

Recent changes introduced to the Pharmacy contract, mean that Pharmacies will be encouraged financially to move towards providing more services to patients, rather than relying on medication dispensing to provide the majority of their financial re-numeration.

In light of this, the CHC were pleased to hear through the results of our survey, that the majority of patients accessing Pharmacy Services do so without difficulties, and are pleased with the service they receive, despite the challenges faced by Pharmacy throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Health Board has carried out work in recent years to provide information to the public around identifying the most appropriate Clinician to deal with their specific health care concerns, in order that patients make the most clinically appropriate appointments with the most appropriate Healthcare professional.

In order for the new contract changes to be utilised to their fullest potential, the CHC believes it is vital that patients are made aware of the full range of services available to them from their local Pharmacy, and how best to access these services.

It was disappointing however, to hear about the number of patients who experience difficulties on a regular basis in regards to ordering and collecting their repeat prescriptions. It was even more disappointing to hear that it is the patients themselves who are left to rectify these issues, travelling back and fore between GP Practice and Pharmacy to try to obtain their medication.

Poor communication between Pharmacy and patients, and between Pharmacy and GP has been highlighted throughout the report, and action should be taken to improve this as much as possible. The CHC would also like to see any prescription issues rectified between Pharmacy and GP, without the need for patients to travel between both Healthcare providers to locate their prescription, or rectify any errors or omissions.

Thanks

We thank everyone who took the time to share their views and experiences with us about their health and care services and to share their ideas.

We hope the feedback people have taken time to share influences healthcare services to recognise and value what they do well – and take action where they need to as quickly as they can to make things better.

Feedback

We'd love to hear what you think about this publication, and any suggestions about how we could have improved it, so we can use this to make our future work better.

This report is available in Welsh and English.



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If you write to us in Welsh, we will answer in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding to your correspondence.

We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

South Glamorgan Community Health Council